



FE Week, proud to be

Media Partner



All eyes on the NEC as Skills Show launches

Andrew Bell, Mechanical Engineering CAD, during selection for Squad UK at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Andrew will also be competing at the Skills Show.

Photo by Ellis O'Brien

Fears over conflict of interest

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

The qualifications watchdog is “developing its thinking” on whether providers of apprenticeships should also be awarding bodies after a government report criticised the practice.

An Ofqual spokesperson said it was looking at “potential conflicts of interest and will be saying more about our thinking in due course”.

It follows an 11-month review of apprenticeships, chaired by West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey, that called on the government to look critically at joint ownership.

The report of the review, carried out by the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee, was released last week.

It said: “We do not believe it is desirable for training providers and awarding bodies to be owned by the same group or individuals. The

government should look critically at this serious issue.

“We accept that the practice of joint ownership is not unusual, but learner experience is key and should not be put in jeopardy.

“Robust mechanisms must be put in place to prevent any conflict of interest impacting the learning experience of the workforce.”

Committee members heard evidence from Ged Syddall, the boss of Elmfield, about his company’s contract to provide apprentice training to supermarket giant Morrison. They also heard that he owned awarding body Skillsfirst Awards Limited.

“I set up Skillsfirst because I thought there was a gap in the market for a good, customer-centric, employee-focused awarding body,” Mr Syddall told the committee.

“It is now a very successful awarding body.

“It deals with 30 organisations, including us, so it is a competitive,

out-in-the-market business.”

An Elmfield spokesperson said: “It is common practice for awarding organisations and training providers to be owned by the same organisation.

“The two biggest vocational awarding organisations, Pearson and City & Guilds, also receive funding for apprenticeship delivery. As far as we know, Ofqual does not consider this to be a conflict of interest.

“If it is decided that this is not acceptable, we would be happy to restructure accordingly.”

A Pearson spokesperson said: “We work with a range of training providers and awarding organisations and are confident in the high quality and integrity of teaching, learning and assessment we deliver. We welcome a dialogue to provide reassurances.”

A spokesperson for City & Guilds declined to comment.

Ofqual’s spokesperson said: “We have an interest in apprenticeships

and, in particular, issues around quality, qualifications design and responsiveness, and the qualifications market.

“We are continuing to develop our thinking about market issues and potential conflicts of interest, and will be saying more about our thinking in due course.”

The qualifications watchdog is also investigating Pearson, which publishes textbooks and hands out academic qualifications as Edexcel. It said its aim was to preserve “confidence in the exam system”.

The Pearson spokesperson added: “We have robust conflict of interest processes and work with a full range of publishers, not just our own imprints.”

Ofqual’s investigation into Pearson, which includes a review of the wider qualifications market, launched around a year ago is expected to take 18 months.

See inside for more on the BIS Select Committee report.

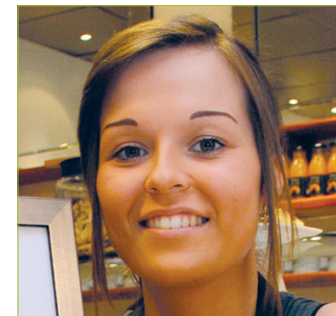
Monday, November 12, 2012
www.feweek.co.uk

Interview with Will Torrent



Page 5

Campus round-up



Page 8 and 9

inside...



Download the *FE Week* ‘Supporting Improvement’ supplement today from

www.feweek.co.uk

IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH

LSIS

LEARNING
AND SKILLS
IMPROVEMENT
SERVICE

Edition 45

FE Week is the only newspaper dedicated to news, analysis, jobs and fun in the FE sector.

And tweet us your thoughts @feweek or with the hashtag #feweek

Editor:	Nick Linford
Deputy editor:	Chris Henwood
Subeditor:	Jill Craven
Head designer	Daniel Duke
News reporter:	Holly Welham
Sales manager:	Chardelle Mason
Operations:	Shane Mann
Events:	Natalie Tremlett
Profiles:	Janet Murray (freelance)
Contributors:	Adrian Bailey MP
	Gordon Marsden MP
	Professor John Field

For an annual subscription to FE Week for just £75 visit www.feweek.co.uk and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page. If you are interested in placing a product or job advert in a future edition please click on the 'advertise' link at the top of the page on www.feweek.co.uk or contact:

E: chardelle.mason@feweek.co.uk
T: 020 8123 4891
M: 0783 7769 411

Top apprenticeship tweets:

- 

@WRStirling
Can someone explain why we need the Holt Review, the BIS Committee Review, and the Richards Review?
- 

@Len_Duvall
Alarming report on national apprenticeship scheme. We need stronger ambitions and tighter checks for taxpayer value
- 

@SThompson20
BIS apprenticeship report proves what many thought - recent surge in numbers may have been at the expense of quality
- 

@NeilEdwards61
NAS should have statutory responsibility for raising apprenticeship awareness in schools -says new BIS report -couldn't agree more
- 

@greglovelluk
Just read BIS report on apprenticeships. Worrying no. of low-skill, short-term schemes which wldn't fit usual def. of apprenticeship

Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd
161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

Exclusive interview with BIS committee's chair

Chris Henwood
[@chris_henwood](#)

With the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee report highlighting a number of apprenticeship issues, FE Week deputy editor Chris Henwood met chairman Adrian Bailey MP to discuss where he thinks the government is getting it wrong.

Are you critical of the government's aims on apprenticeships?
The government has interpreted this programme as being a numbers-driven game so that it can proclaim it is improving the skills levels of the country.
However, what is hasn't done is to ensure that the apprenticeships programme is of the quality that is needed and that it is focused on areas where there are skills shortages. And by not doing that, it is in danger of wasting a lot of public money.
We believe as a committee that the government should define exactly what its objectives are in spending money on apprenticeships, and then back that up with the appropriate policies designed to achieve those objectives.

Which recommendation would make the most difference?
That's a difficult question because they're all interrelated, but the crucial one is on the quality and definition of apprenticeships
Once you have a tight definition and ensure that an apprenticeship course is perceived as having quality, then you are far more likely to get people aware of it and willing to take one on.

Were you surprised by the lack of definition?
Yes. I hadn't realised the range of courses that were described as apprenticeships when, in fact, the public does have a fair idea of what apprenticeships should involve: a certain length of time, training both on and off-the-job and appropriate accreditation to ensure that whoever has taken one of these courses has genuinely learned something and enhanced his or her ability to take on further jobs.

Did the inquiry hold any shocks or surprises for you?
Yes, there were a couple of things. First, the lack of awareness in schools — we heard of a survey that demonstrated that only something like 7 per cent of young people in schools were aware of apprenticeships as a possible career choice.
That is quite frightening. Further investigation demonstrated that this was very much because schools are judged and geared to delivering A-levels and university entrants. If we are ever to get our best and brightest into vocational pursuits, then we've got to raise the status of apprenticeships.
The National Apprenticeship Service has to take responsibility for promoting them in

schools and schools need to refocus slightly . . . they have to be judged in part on how many young people they deliver into apprenticeships.
The second thing that came as a shock was the excessive profiteering of one or two operators in the market. When the chief executive of a company, in this case Elmfield, says he has been overpaid by the government, that is a matter of real concern. The government needs to introduce processes to prevent it from happening in the future.

What would you consider a fair profit margin?
I would have said 15 per cent is on the high side. One of the concerns the committee had was that you've got this pot of money and you've got a delivery chain — and different bodies at different stages in the chain make a profit.
But if they're all making 15 per cent, it doesn't leave much for the actual delivery at the workplace, which is why the committee recommended the delivery chain needs to be streamlined.
There are too many operators and it appears, in some cases, they are taking too much money out of the programme. That inevitably impacts on the ability to deliver the number and quality of apprentices at the workplace.

Do you think there are lots of providers with high profit margins?
The committee didn't carry out a wide-ranging investigation into this, but certainly evidence has been put forward that there is some abuse.
I wouldn't say it was widespread. It's not just a question of abuse. There are legitimate companies — some of them doing a very good job — but there are so many of them and the supply chain is so long that you've got to ask 'couldn't we organise this delivery of skills in a more cost-effective way?'
That is not to blame individual companies and accuse them of not delivering or taking excessive profit, but just to get a system that gets money to where it needs to go quickly and with fewer people involved.

The government has introduced the Richard Review, which is a belated recognition that it didn't get it right when it introduced the apprenticeship programme. The committee's findings will no doubt be reflected at least in part by that review.
Given the combination of the likely outcome of this review and the committee report, to which it's got to reply, I do think BIS will take the inquiry seriously and hopefully come up with some sort of recommendations or actions to implement these changes. At the end of the day my report has aroused a lot of public interest — the government recognises it has to respond to that concern.

Were there any positives for apprenticeships?
Yes. First, there is an undoubted government commitment to skills and that is shared across the party divide in the Commons — a



Adrian Bailey MP

recognition that there is a need to raise skill levels in this country.
Second, the government recognises that it didn't quite get it right and needs to change some of its delivery. But there is now a greater awareness among both businesses and young people of the potential of apprenticeships. That is positive, but it's been a long hard road to get to where we are and we need to go a lot further.

The report is critical of the number of official bodies involved in apprenticeships. Do you see a future for the Skills Funding Agency and National Apprenticeship Service in their present forms?
The committee was inclined to think the SFA and NAS should be merged and I think the government may well look at this again.
There was disagreement among witnesses at the inquiry, but instinctively we felt you would be taking out one link of the long chain delivering apprenticeships and, above all, making it simpler for would-be providers to have one port of call. My feeling is this should happen and probably will happen.

The number of apprenticeships recently topped 500,000. Would you question the validity of any of those?
I would question whether they are apprenticeships in the terms that we would want them to be defined. Something like 70 per cent of the increase has been in provision for those over 24, mainly in the retail sector, and I believe these are mostly people employed already.
That doesn't mean that's a bad thing . . . there's a good argument for raising the skill levels of people in employment so that they can enhance their prospects.
But a lot of work needs to be done to demonstrate that in terms of the money that has been invested, the actual benefits do accrue to both the individuals themselves and the economy as a whole
We also need to know whether that money might not be better targeted to other groups who may enhance their training more and contribute more to the economy.

Group chair appointed to steer FE Guild

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

An independent chair has been appointed as proposals to create an FE Guild take shape.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), has been appointed chair of a steering group.

His appointment follows a meeting of Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) chief executive Graham Hoyle and Association of Colleges (AoC) chief executive Martin Doel.

Mr Hughes said the guild — a single body to set professional standards and codes of behaviour as well as develop qualifications — provided a great opportunity to enhance the status and reputation of the sector.

“We need employers and practitioners, and the organisations that represent them, to come together to make this work on behalf of the adults and young people who are served by the sector.

“I am certain we can develop a new organisation that advances professionalism, improves leadership and governance and helps

to deliver even better learning opportunities across England.”

He believed he was invited to become chair because of the “unique” place and purpose of NIACE; it did not represent any interest group, other than learners.

“I hope I have a reputation for getting things done . . . and there is a lot of work to be done”

“Second, I hope I have a reputation for getting things done . . . and there is a lot of work to be done to build consensus about the purpose, role, structure and governance of the FE Guild. I hope to be one of the people driving that forward over the coming months.”

He said the steering group now had to meet employers, practitioners and representative bodies to debate and discuss what the guild

should focus on, how it should be set up and what the governance arrangements would look like.

“That debate and discussion needs to be thorough, professional and intense. Our aim has to be to have the guild up and running in mid-2013, starting to develop its role and its activities and having an impact in the next academic year.”

It is understood that one of the steering group’s first tasks is to develop a list of functions for the guild.

An AELP spokesperson said: “Following the ministerial announcement accepting our bid with the AoC to create an FE Guild, Graham Hoyle and Martin Doel invited all the key players who supported the bid to a meeting to consider next steps.

“The group asked Graham and Martin to set up a small project team of four to act as a steering group for the project.

“Notwithstanding the agreed need to develop a guild that was employer (provider)-led, it was felt that an independent chair would be both helpful and appropriate.”

The AoC declined to comment.



David Hughes, NIACE

Editors comment page 4

Teachers unskilled to provide careers advice

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

The fifth annual Colleges Week has kicked off with the publication of a report that shows schoolteachers and parents are struggling to give youngsters the right advice to prepare for the world of work.

Colleges Week bosses are hoping students and lecturers will take part with a host of events up and down the country and are calling on event organisers to tweet what’s happening using #collegesweek as a hashtag.

The theme of this year’s week, which ends on Sunday, is employability and work readiness.

Research released by the Association of Colleges (AoC) to mark the event suggests that 82 per cent of teachers felt that they didn’t have the appropriate knowledge to advise pupils on careers.

The research further claims that 44 per cent admitted giving a pupil bad or uninformed advice in the past, and that 82 per cent wanted better guidance on advising pupils about their options post-16.

Twenty per cent of parents felt out of their depth advising their children about careers, while 32 per cent said they only felt comfortable talking about jobs they knew.

Joy Mercer, AoC director of policy, said: “Overall parents and schoolteachers exert more influence on a young person’s education choices than a school careers adviser.

“This study shows that teachers, in particular, recognise they are struggling with this challenge.

“Careers advice is a professional discipline

that requires training and development, and we know that many school budgets cannot stretch far enough to fund this resource.”

Colleges Week is supported by The Skills Show, the UK’s biggest careers and skills event, which takes place at the NEC Birmingham from Thursday to Saturday.

A Colleges Week spokesperson said: “The idea of the week is to showcase the vital role that colleges play in providing young people, adults and businesses with the opportunities they need to succeed. This year’s theme aims to highlight how colleges can improve people’s chances of getting into work and help businesses to grow.”

She added: “It is supported by The Skills Show, and much of the materials developed have been designed to complement Skills Show activity. For instance, we created a guide for colleges to engage schoolteachers with have-a-go events.”

New Facebook application Quizl has also been launched to mark Colleges Week. It is for 14 to 18-year-olds and aims to get them thinking about their future.



Available from www.quizl.co.uk, it has been developed in with careers advice experts from Babcock Lifeskills.

Send a write-up of your Colleges week event, including pictures (with captions) for inclusion in FE Week to news@feweek.co.uk. The best five contributions will win an FE Week mug full of sweets.

The perfect match



You + SQA

Some things just go together. Like you and a national qualifications body that puts you first.

We have unrivalled experience of developing robust and relevant qualifications to help colleges and their students achieve a better future.

To find out more, just give us a buzz.

t: 0303 333 0330 e: mycentre@sqa.org.uk
w: www.sqa.org.uk/businessdevelopment



Editor's comment

Mission impossible?

It's a tough job but somebody's got to do it.

And with David Hughes in charge of the steering group, the FE Guild has got a chance.

It was always going to take a brave man, or woman, to try to match up the seemingly competing interests of the two leading bodies.

The AoC's marriage to AELP could be one fraught with troubles — public sector interests pull in one direction, while profit motives pull in the other.

Experience and knowledge of the sector will be required to strike the right balance. And David has both.

So FE Week would like to publicly wish him the best of luck in matching up the demands of the AoC and the AELP.

And that's before you mention the plethora of other bodies involved.

Nick Linford, editor



Good luck David

Correction

Over the course of the past few weeks, *FE Week* editor Nick Linford has been offering his thoughts to readers with his column, above.

Provider payments and subcontractor booms have been the focus of his attention.

And last week it was the turn of Train to Gain funding increases by the SFA. These increases would, he said, be backdated to August 2011.

As Paul Baker, from Basingstoke College, rightly says: "Surely the editor's comment should say August 2012. I can't see them backdating the increase to August 2011."

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.

Where have all the students gone?

Chris Henwood
[@chris_henwood](#)

More than a million students could not be traced by researchers wanting to find out what happened to them when their courses finished.

Just 12.9 per cent of 1,455,746 students could be reached in a study by GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Researchers were hampered by a host of contact phone number problems, including incomplete numbers, no answers, engaged lines, barred numbers and numbers directing through to computer and fax machines.

The problems meant that just 188,259 learners completed the interviews, although the report does not go into detail on what happened to them.

Mick Fletcher, visiting research fellow at the Institute of Education and member of the Policy Consortium, said the report highlighted the difficulty faced by providers in determining learner destinations.

"Even after heroic efforts by the researchers the output is unlikely to be of much help to potential students.

"They are not very likely to be interested in the average performance of those who

started on a whole range of courses at different levels the year before last, and most unlikely to look into the details of how the indicator was produced.

"If the aim of the exercise is to help real people make choices rather than help quangos to rate institutions, money would be better spent on more detailed local analyses of what happens to students on specific programmes."

Matt Dean, technical manager at the Association of Colleges, said: "It's very difficult for colleges to track learners' destinations.

"Mechanisms to contact students by the details provided are there, but there's no guarantee these will remain correct or that students will be willing to participate.

"Once a learner leaves, it's extremely difficult to track them. It's easier to track learners who go into higher education through UCAS and universities themselves, but tracking learners who go into employment is a real struggle.

"There are protocols preventing even government departments sharing this kind of data – and it would be a huge amount of data to manage. It would require high-level policy discussions to solve and involve the Departments for Education; Business, Innovation and Skills; Work and Pensions; The Treasury and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. We would have to see all these bodies



Mick Fletcher

sharing coherent, consistent and accurate data, and for it to be kept in a robust system."

An SFA spokesperson said it was handling an *FE Week* query on the cost of the research under the Freedom of Information Act.

"Learner destinations is one of four performance indicators on the FE Choices comparison site that aims to give learners and employers clear and consistent information about colleges and training providers to help them to make better, more informed choices about where to learn or train.

"This report was one part of the work GfK NOP commissioned . . . to establish the learner destinations performance indicator scores for providers for the 2009/10 destination year."

Comments

Urgent reform to apprenticeships needed, says BIS Committee

NAS criticised by BIS Select Committee for not engaging with schools.

Given the widely held view that the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) should have more involvement with learners through schools, we were disappointed by the chief executive's apparent lack of enthusiasm, citing the Education Act 2011 and telling us that NAS was not statutorily responsible.

Peter Cobrin, director, Apprenticeships England

Apprenticeships 4 England LinkedIn Group 8000+ members discuss the issues that the report highlights on a daily basis.

Let's hope after all the reports and reviews that once and for all a way forward is decided and agreed so that we can get on with our daytime jobs of delivering quality apprenticeships.

Lindsay McCurdy, Apprenticeships England

A very comprehensive and wide-ranging report. There's a lot I agree with, but also a few points I don't.

Agree — schools to have responsibility for raising awareness, checks on value for money, quantity over quality, etc.

Disagree — employers having to publish their



Leave a comment on the *FE Week* website

contribution, providers having to publish their contributions. Sounds good in theory but it is unwarranted and unnecessary bureaucracy that we can all do without.

If the National Apprenticeship Service is focussed on publicising the programme, on engaging with schools and ensuring quality, that would be great.

The money for this extra work could be found from scrapping the apprenticeship vacancy online portal which exists solely to provide nice statistics for the Minister; but which few providers value.

Scott Upton, Sandwell College

Have you got something to say about FE or one of our stories?

We want to hear from you.

Email us with Comments in the subject line at news@feweek.co.uk or leave a comment on our website www.feweek.co.uk

Or, you can write to us at *FE Week*, 161-165 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 8JA.

Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by *FE Week* upon request.

FE Week profile

Will Torrent ~ his story



Holly Welham

@hollywelham

Confectionery consultant and WorldSkills medal winner Will Torrent talks to FE Week

At 26, Will Torrent has achieved more than many chefs could ever dream of.

He's worked with celebrity cook Heston Blumenthal at the Michelin-starred Fat Duck restaurant, won a host of awards, including a WorldSkills medal for his chocolates and desserts, and is the pastry consultant for the supermarket Waitrose.

He's recently finished his first book, *Patisserie at Home*, which is out next year; is working on his own brand of products, and will be hitting television screens this December on a cookery show he's presenting with Jamie Oliver.

And it all started with a cake made by his grandmother, Kath.

"My nan always used to make the best chocolate cake," says Torrent, who is organising the confectionery and pastry competition at this week's Skills Show.

"Chocolate Victoria sponge, chocolate fudge icing and chocolate buttons on top. We had it for every birthday.

"I remember vividly that moment of not quite reaching the workbench, mixing the cake together, eating the raw mixture off the wooden spoon, and knowing that we'd always

have this chocolate cake to look forward to.

"If I have chocolate cake now and the flavour's right I can instantly be transported back to my fifth birthday. That's the power of food — that it's exciting. And that hit me from an early age."

Torrent grew up in Iver, Buckinghamshire, with younger sister Sophie. His mum, Anne, and dad, Peter, both music teachers, encouraged him to cook, but it was a week's work experience with Blumenthal at 16 that

"The British press could tell things were going wrong. They saw me sweating with my workstation in a complete mess"

ignited his determination to become a top chef.

A teacher at his school knew a waiter at Blumenthal's restaurant and used the connection to arrange work experience for him.

"It completely changed my life," he says. "I was absolutely petrified when I walked in as I'd never been in a professional kitchen before. The restaurant had bought me pristine whites and I was absolutely on the edge of my seat. But Heston was still cooking and took me

under his wing. At 8am on the Monday he got everyone together and said 'this is Will. Be nice to him'."

One of his first jobs was making mustard ice cream. "That childlike experimentation with food really made me go wow, this is cool. The week went on and I absolutely loved it. I began to understand the science behind food," he says.

On his last day at the restaurant, Blumenthal

"In the extreme awfulness I felt like I was being eaten up from the ground, but when I finished I felt on top of the world"

told him that if he wanted to be the best, he was the only person who would stand in his way "so go on and do it".

From that moment, Torrent immersed himself in cookery books and programmes, and dedicated himself to experimenting with food and refining techniques.

When he finished his GCSEs he was tempted to go straight to catering college, but decided to stay on at school and complete his A levels in case things didn't work out.

At 18 he went to the University of West London to study culinary arts management, achieving a first-class degree and specialising in chocolate, desserts and pastry.

"I had this amazing tutor, Yolande Stanley. She was so encouraging and warm, and brilliantly talented," he says.

"Our first lesson was strawberry tarts. For me, this meant jam tarts, but here was this ex-pastry chef at the Ritz making a beautiful strawberry tart. It was the first time I'd ever been shown proper desserts.

"The next class was gutting fish and I remember thinking, I'm covered in fish tails and I stink, or I'm covered in chocolate and flour. No contest."

It was also his tutor who suggested that he compete to be part of the UK team for WorldSkills, billed as the biggest international skills competition in the world.

He was selected to be part of Squad UK and after two years' training, flew to Japan to compete in the pastry and chocolate heat at WorldSkills 2007.

The first two days of the competition went brilliantly he says, but then came day three.

"It was one of the worst days ever for me. Something went wrong in the afternoon, which had a domino effect on everything else I was doing," he recalls.

"It spiralled and I couldn't get myself out of the mess. The British press could tell things were going wrong. They saw me sweating with my workstation in a complete mess. People were gathering round and the judges were

coming to check what was happening."

"I was making a pistachio chocolate. But it wasn't setting and I could feel my shoulders coming over the top of me and this massive dark cloud appear. I had a card with symbols in case something went wrong and I pointed to the exclamation mark that meant you were ill. My time stopped and I was rushed off pale and shaking."

He was taken to the judges' office where team leader Bruce Robinson tried to calm him down.

As part of the competitors' mental training they'd been told to imagine they had a monkey on their shoulder telling them that they couldn't do it — something that they needed to ignore.

"I came bounding out of the room, did the best chocolates I've ever done, got my highest mark of the competition, and finished on time to applause," he says.

Torrent, who is managing confectionery and pastry competitors at the Skills Show, says he often tells young chefs this story.

"It encapsulates so much. In the extreme awfulness I felt like I was being eaten up from the ground, but when I finished I felt on top of the world."

He won a medallion of excellence and when he came back to England, moved to a Swiss patisserie in Surrey where he stayed for two years.

Three years ago he decided to set up his own consultancy business, Will Torrent, and as well as working for Waitrose, is advising restaurant chain Zizzi's.

He says that one of the best things WorldSkills gave him was the chance to encourage young people. "It's such a joy when you see them do something right. Their eyes light up, and it's 'yes, I've done a good job, I've impressed the judges'," he says.

"I know what their strengths and weaknesses are, how they compete under pressure, what makes them tick. I'm there to say to them you can be the best, you can do what I did. If you don't know what possibilities are out there, you don't know what to strive for it. It gives you ambition, determination, drive."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?
The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien

What did you want to be when you were younger?
Either a footballer for Chelsea, a singer or a chef

What do you do to switch off from work?
Play football with the boys, play the piano or chill out in front of the television

Who, living or dead, would you invite to dinner?
Frank Sinatra

What would your super power be?
Fly — my childhood hero was Superman

FE Week Experts

Report casts shadow on apprentices

Careers guidance should be boosting apprenticeships, says shadow minister Gordon Marsden

Earlier this month the BIS Select Committee published its report into apprenticeships, compiled after an exhaustive 11-month investigation. The report provided a forensic examination of the government's handling of the scheme and highlighted a number of shortcomings that persist with the scheme.

In particular, the committee criticised the government for lacking any coherent overarching strategy for apprenticeships. The committee also recommended that apprenticeships should be a pathway to new skills, rather than accreditation of existing ones - arguably something this government has done little to tackle. We share the committee's concerns, not least given the premium on public spending in the current financial climate.

“Provision of face to face guidance has been drastically scaled back and is patchy at best”

The committee's report also once again re-emphasised the importance of maintaining quality and urges the government not to lose sight of this in their understandable dash for ever higher numbers. The committee also recognised the vital role careers guidance plays in supporting young people towards apprenticeships.

But as the government's own review by Jason Holt pointed out a few months back, the changes that came about following the abolition of Connexions and DFE-led changes to the statutory guidance, provision of face to face guidance has been drastically scaled back and is patchy at best. This is an area the government urgently needs to revisit given the final data for 2011/12 which showed 16-18 Apprenticeships falling by 2 per cent in comparison with last year - this at a time where youth unemployment remains at its highest level for generation.

This report, coming so soon after Jason Holt's, and echoing similar findings earlier in the year from the National Audit Office, shows that the government still has much more work to do to. It could start by implementing our sensible proposals to boost apprenticeships, which we launched earlier in the year. These include using public procurement to ensure government contractors offer apprenticeship placements and encouraging larger companies to buddy up with smaller ones in their supply chain - but they have so far refused to engage with these practical suggestions. The government also failed to engage with a number of



Jason Holt's proposals, as regular readers of *FE Week* would have seen from his own comment piece in this paper.

Moving forward, I personally believe a much greater emphasis needs to be put on progression in apprenticeships. There needs to be improved pathways to progress through the apprenticeship scheme from Levels two up to three, four and beyond, but also into University.

I am monitoring closely the changes UCAS are proposing the university admission system to ensure apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications do not find themselves at a disadvantage. If we truly want to maintain apprenticeships as a gold standard alternative to the academic route, then it must have the same structures for progression as the latter has.

The committee report also shows that none of us can afford to let up in the drive to maintain quality across apprenticeships. Indeed in its tireless reporting,

“Personally, I believe a much greater emphasis needs to be put on progression in Apprenticeships”

FE Week deserves much credit for bringing to public attention instances of poor quality provision and the then growing trend of short term apprenticeships.

Moving forward, I think these issues over quality will only be brought into sharper relief with the expected publication of Doug Richard's report in Apprenticeships later this month. The government needs to engage with what Richard says to ensure that, as the select committee warned, quality does not get lost in the drive for quantity.

This is something we in Labour recognise - there is no point chasing ever inflated numbers if at the end of the day, you let down the very people who took up apprentices in the hope of the better future prospects and life chances.

Gordon Marsden MP, Shadow Minister for Further Education, Skills and Regional Growth

Action needed for workforce skills goals

Eleven months down the line and plenty to be done on apprenticeships, says the chair of the BIS Committee, Adrian Bailey

It is fair to say that the past few years have been turbulent for everyone, especially businesses, employees and young people.

It is perhaps timely, then, that in the month when some green shoots of economic growth appear from what has been a long double-dip recession, my committee is publishing a report outlining how, through the apprenticeship programme, government can help this country up-skill its way through economic recovery.

A highly-skilled workforce is essential to maintaining and enhancing our global competitiveness. Apprenticeships can help create such a workforce, boosting economic growth, employment, education standards and social mobility.

“We have made a significant number of recommendations, on how apprenticeships should be improved”

Apprenticeships outdate all of the political parties - they are too important to be used as a political tool. Action, reform and prioritisation are needed and I am pleased to see that apprenticeships are, rightfully, high on the government's agenda.

Skills are what matter, and finding the best way of delivering them is at the heart of my committee's inquiry.

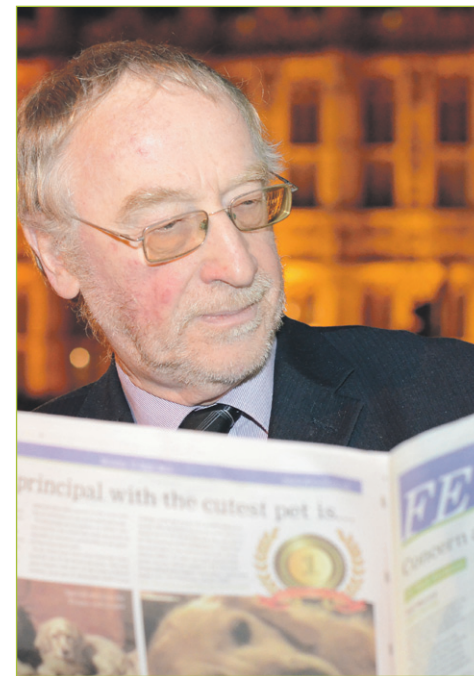
Our committee spent almost a year investigating what reforms are needed in order to create an apprenticeship programme that is fit for purpose. We considered more than 130 pieces of written evidence, spoke to more than 40 experts, visited several companies and trainers of apprentices and also spoke to apprentices themselves.

We were consistently impressed by the passion and focus shown by all those involved, particularly on the importance of getting this programme right.

We have made a significant number of recommendations, on how the apprenticeship programme should be improved. It is now the government's job to respond to this report.

Overall, we support the significant increase in apprenticeships, but this has not always been matched by an increase in quality - the purpose of an apprenticeship has been lost.

The government needs to better articulate its strategy for apprenticeships and a good place to start would be by providing a clear



definition of what an apprenticeship is.

While we welcome the expansion in apprenticeship starts, the success of the apprenticeship programme should not be judged by numbers alone. At present, the National Apprenticeship Service's objectives are too heavily weighted on numbers. In the future, the quality of the programme should be seen as an equal priority, and should be assessed rigorously.

One of the most striking moments in our inquiry came when we spoke to an apprentice in Sheffield who told us that, when he decided to turn down his university offers and take up an apprenticeship, his school didn't even invite him to the school's awards ceremony. Not going to university was seen as a failure. Sadly this was not a lone example.

Time and again, we found that the underlying assumption was that vocational training is only for those unable to take an academic route. This is wrong and must be changed. That is why we recommended that both routes should be given equal prominence in careers advice and that this should be implemented in law.

Whenever the government invests, it has to demonstrate that it has achieved value for money. Up to now, the government's performance in this regard has been patchy at best.

We have heard of specific examples where training providers claim to have trained apprentices for only 50 per cent of the required funding, to undercut their competitors.

We have also heard that some training providers have made a fortune because the government didn't understand what it was paying for.

The Department has acknowledged that there is insufficient data and we say that this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The Select Committee backs the government in its drive to increase the number of apprenticeships. Enhancing skills and boosting employment is not only a good thing for a government to do, it is vital.

By implementing the recommendations made by our committee, the government's apprenticeship programme will be defined by transparency, quality and success. Only then, can apprenticeships play their full role in securing our country's place in the global economy for years to come.

Adrian Bailey MP, chair of the BIS Select Committee

FE Week Experts

Apprenticeships: hats off to the stubborn geeks

If you relied on mainstream press and broadcasting media, you'd be forgiven for thinking that apprenticeships were something from the past, says Professor John Field

What a mess we've made of apprenticeships. The Select Committee on Business, Industry and Skills found that a sizeable minority of apprentices receive no training whatsoever; the system is riddled with conflicts of interest, often unreported and largely unresolved; profit levels appear to be inflated by government grants; some employers simply badge existing training as an apprenticeship to claim funding; the system involves de facto age discrimination, with no apparent rationale, as well as gender discrimination in some trades. Worse, the uneven quality of training has damaged public perceptions of apprenticeship schemes in general.

None of this will come as a surprise to anyone who has followed online debate. But if you relied on mainstream press and broadcasting media, you'd be forgiven for thinking that apprenticeships were something from the past, inherited from the medieval craft guilds, and unsuited to a modern economy.

And it is true that the apprenticeship system that operated until the 1980s was flawed. Lads

followed dads, excluding many women and immigrants; whether a particular craft was included or not was often a matter of historical accident (and workforce gendering); and craft status often became a pawn in collective bargaining, bedding rigidities into a system that should indeed have been modernised as industry and skills requirements changed.

But instead of modernising apprenticeships, the Thatcher government chose to smash them. In place of backward-looking, time-served, tripartite apprenticeships it promoted the go-ahead standards-based competency model of the National Vocational Qualifications system. Apprenticeship systems survived in small pockets, but for the most part they vanished as employers replaced them with short, cheap training schemes.

By contrast, a number of other European countries opted to modernise their apprenticeship systems. They retained the principle of social partnership, seeking to work out the problems of modernisation through consultation and negotiation. And they tried to match the new, flexible forms of work practices needed for European industry to survive.

The result was by no means perfect. Gender segregation often survived, with young women dominating apprenticeships in traditional female areas and males in engineering and IT.

Flexibility was sometimes insufficiently developed, as shown most notably in Germany's attempt to impose a (western) model of apprenticeship on the very different labour market of the former East Germany. It is still far too difficult for adults to upskill or reskill.

But these were and are seen as reasons for reforming a high quality pathway to highly skilled labour. Hilary Steedman's report for the International Labour Organisation identifies a number of features of successful apprenticeship schemes that, she shows, have helped to reduce youth unemployment and maintain labour quality.

But what interests me particularly is that none of this is new. Campaigners and researchers have blogged repeatedly on the topic, and there has been sustained coverage in the redoubtable *FE Week*. Academics such as Lorna Unwin and Alison Fuller have written and spoken about the policy flaws. Think tanks and the National Audit Office got involved. And while trade unions have generally been quiet, individuals such as Tom Wilson of UnionLearn have raised tough questions about the treatment of this vulnerable group of workers.

Yet the mainstream press has had little to say about another sorry chapter in the long story of Britain's problem with vocational skills. Hats off, then, to the handful of stubborn geeky



buggers who have worked hard to raise concern over what is an important issue, but not sexy, fashionable or high status enough.

Now we move on to the much tougher task of building an apprenticeship system that is fit for purpose. The Select Committee's recommendations cover eight pages. So far the Skills Minister, Matthew Hancock, has issued a bland statement affirming the value of apprenticeships and promising to look at improvements. *FE Week* will no doubt be watching.

Professor John Field, director of research in the school of education at the University of Sterling in lifelong learning.



NOW AVAILABLE

The inspiring new vocational qualifications for students aged 16+

Cambridge Technicals come with two free moderation visits a year, free online resources, free professional developments and they have UCAS points at Level 3.

They've been developed to provide students with the transferable skills that are essential in the workplace or for further study.

They're available as part of wider programmes of learning or as standalone qualifications.

Choose from:

Art and Design	Health and Social Care
Business	Media
IT	Sport

For more information visit cambridgetechnical.org.uk

FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empra**TM

Former Saturday girl wins top award



Emily Cooper, 19, from Bury College with her apprentice of the year award

The North West Intermediate apprentice of the year title has gone to a 19-year-old student team leader.

Bury College's Emily Cooper was presented with the prize at the National Training and National Apprenticeship Awards 2012, held at Legends, Bentley Motors Ltd, Crewe.

Emily is completing her apprenticeship through a local employer, Emerson's Cafe, and Bury College. She started working at Emerson's three years ago as a Saturday girl, when she was still completing her GCSEs.

She was promoted to manager and now leads a team of six.

She is a mentor for two of her

colleagues who are currently completing apprenticeships in catering and hospitality.

"Winning apprentice of the year is absolutely amazing," she said. "To be selected from all the apprentices in the region and recognised for all my hard work at such a young age, is a real achievement." Emily did an apprenticeship in hospitality and catering before moving on to an apprenticeship in team leadership.

Asa Gordon, director of employer responsive services at Bury College said: "Emily is a shining example of how an apprenticeship can provide opportunities and training to expand a person's career."

Solicitors team up with college to give one-to-one advice

Midland law students will be keeping bang up-to-date on all things legal, thanks to a new partnership with local solicitors.

Mentors from Howells Solicitors will offer one-to-one advice to 25 Sheffield College students over the coming year.

The firm has agreed to provide work shadowing, and is donating its copies of The Law Society Gazette to students. It has also paid for an academic diary for each of Hillsborough College's 400 A level students (the colleges share a campus).

Student Grant Robinson, 17, said: "I will gain first-hand experience and I can ask for advice on any topics to do with law, whether it's applying for a law degree or getting a training contract afterwards.

"All the advice, knowledge and work experience I am gaining from the law interest group is developing my skills and giving me a greater understanding of the roles that underline being a solicitor."

The Howells mentors include solicitor Tom Bernard. He said: "I know how difficult it can be when you are embarking on a career in law and I can pass on my experience."



From left: Christine Moorey, Sue Colven, Pip Wise, Promise Gunzo, Charlotte Worthing, Graham Hogarth, Marie Busfield, Danny Smith and Pam Kenworthy

Student shows dark side for exhibition



Cleveland College student Mark Nichols

Arts students delved into their dark sides to stage a major exhibition with a haunting theme.

Cleveland College of Art & Design, in Middlesbrough, was approached by Preston Hall Museum, Stockton, to create a gothic horror exhibition of work in its new gallery.

The collection by Year 1 and 2 BTec extended diploma in interactive media students will be on display until the end of the year.

Winning student Mark Nichols, 17, said: "I looked at some gothic art and tried to make it more striking with a shadow watching over the

hall that manifested itself as long tendrils."

Preston Hall exhibition officer Mark Tindle said: "Students had free rein to wander around the hall and its grounds to soak up the atmosphere and be inspired by its heritage.

"We wanted to get them used to working to a professional client brief and the standard was outstanding."

College tutor John Stead said: "It has been a great opportunity for all our students to show off their skills. People think interactive media is just games design when it is much broader than that, which this exhibition demonstrates."

Celebrity scientist opens £7m building



Lord Winston meets students at Middlesbrough College

A top scientist gave North Yorkshire students a masterclass on genetics to celebrate the opening of their college's new £7m building.

Lord Robert Winston also took a tour of Middlesbrough College's new sixth-form centre and sports academy.

The building of MC6 has been part of the biggest regeneration scheme outside London.

Lord Winston, who has presented a number of factual television series, including Superhuman, said: "It is immensely important to engage with young people as they consider their career options, which is why I'm delighted to be opening MC6 which will offer exceptional facilities for students.

"It's great to see continued investment in education and the future of the country's young people at this time."

College principal Mike Hopkins said: "This is a historic day for the college, our students and for the town of Middlesbrough.

"By creating MC6 and its extraordinary facilities we have raised the bar for the young people of the Tees Valley by providing one of the best further education centres in the country."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



Mayor of Hillingdon Michael Markham takes over from a beauty therapy student and face paints student Danny Hulusi, 19

Young entrepreneurs get spooky for charity

Entrepreneurs at a West London college raised £150 for local charities with a Halloween event.

Scary treats, ghoulish make-up and spooky dances were all organised by Uxbridge College's entrepreneurs' society, the Young Dragons.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Hillingdon joined students for the event, with Mayor Michael Markham even getting stuck in and face painting student Danny Hulusi, 19.

Sharon McCann from student support said: "Everyone involved has worked incredibly hard to make this event a success."

"It was a great opportunity to bring everyone together – and to get some delicious homemade cakes at a bargain price."

Money raised from the day was split between the Mayor's nominated charities, including The Shooting Star Children's Hospice, Hillingdon Young Carers and AgeUK Hillingdon.

Retail student, and one of the Young Dragons, Harsharan Rihal, 19, said: "The Halloween event was extremely exciting. I felt like a real businesswoman taking part in a large-scale event. I really enjoyed working as part of a team."

IfL members celebrate tenth anniversary

To mark its tenth anniversary this year, the Institute for Learning (IfL) invited founder members to an afternoon tea at the House of Commons hosted by Barry Sheerman MP, an IfL patron and former chair of the education select committee.

Tim Boswell, also an IfL patron and a former Conservative education minister, welcomed guests to the event and paid tribute to the further education sector and its staff.

"People have an idea of schools and higher education and, sort of in between, is the bit that they do not focus on," he said. "Further education has the Heineken effect: catching the bits that others cannot reach. But to do this, you need professionalism."

Referring to recent events impacting on IfL, Lord Boswell said, "IfL does matter and each of you should stick with it."



Lord Boswell and Toni Fazaeli, IfL's chief executive

"Learners and the country will benefit greatly from the professionalism of the services that you offer."

Toni Fazaeli, IfL's chief executive, thanked the founder members for their contribution to the profession, their commitment to learners, and their leadership of excellent teaching and learning.

Apprentice star advises aspiring tycoons



Television star and businesswoman Karren Brady, centre above, has backed an entrepreneurship programme run by an East Midlands college.

Lord Sugar's aide on the BBC television series The Apprentice, who is also vice-chairman of West Ham Football Club, visited West Nottinghamshire College to launch a scheme in which experts coach aspiring tycoons to help them to get their business ideas off the ground.

Ms Brady talked about her experiences and joined a panel, which included Shalini Khemka,

co-founder of the London Entrepreneurial Exchange, a support network for entrepreneurs, to be quizzed by 150 students.

Chelsea Salmon, 16, recently set up an anti-bullying website that she wants to roll-out to schools. "Karren made me realise that you can succeed in life regardless of your background," she said.

Principal Asha Khemka said: "Karren Brady is the epitome of what can be achieved with an entrepreneurial spirit and a determination to succeed."

Olympian efforts raise funds for students



From left: Amy Marran, Ola Obidogun, Tessa Sanderson CBE, Newham College's Sam Goode and Andrew Mitchell, David Weir MBE (in wheelchair), footballers Leanne Cowan and Vyan Sampson, and Christine Ohuruogu MBE. Pic: Michael Cockeram Photography

Olympic and Paralympic gold medal winners have helped to raise £32,000 to support hard-up students in East London.

Record-breaking track athlete David Weir and 400m champion Christine Ohuruogu were among guests at the launch of the Learning Revolution Trust at Newham College.

The charity has been set up to help learners of all ages to pay for fees, books, travel, meals and other course expenses.

More than 200 people bought tickets for the event, which was hosted by six-times Olympian Tessa Sanderson.

"The Learning Revolution Trust is about helping people in the East End, the young, the old, the short and the tall. It's about putting them on the right track," she said.

The charity was set up by Newham College with support from the Tessa Sanderson Foundation and Academy.

Trust chair Martin Cumella said: "We believe in the transformational power of learning to change people's lives and opportunities. We believe no one in Newham or East London should be deprived of the opportunity to go to college because of hardship."

Celeb inventor unveils new engineering base



From Left: (back row) Jeff Dakers, John Mills, Dick Strawbridge, (front) Kayleigh Abercromby and Lamar Marks-Hanson get ready to set off fireworks to mark the opening of Kirklees College's new engineering centre

Celebrity engineer and inventor Dick Strawbridge was on hand to open a Yorkshire college's new £7.5m engineering base.

Kirklees College marked the opening of its state-of-the-art learning centre with fireworks, tours and demonstrations, and a guest list of careers advisers, local business men and women, students and education partners.

Dick said: "Being an engineer is fundamental — it's all about life and what you do with your life. You've got your lives ahead of you and you can make a difference because engineers make a difference."

"The world is there to be changed. What's going to happen in your lifetime is going to be

phenomenal, and you can make it happen."

Around 1,000 engineering and motor vehicle students will pass through the new building's doors every week, including 350 apprentices with employment in industry.

The new centre's facilities include maintenance and fabrication workshops, and mechanical workshops, demonstration areas, classrooms, a student refectory and offices for staff.

The college's governing body chair Jeff Dakers said: "This building is for the future. All buildings make statements, and what is being built here is a statement about the future of engineering in our area."

FE Week event report

SFA takes tougher line on charges

Natalie Tremlett

@natalietremlett

The Skills Funding Agency has “hardened its position” on fees charged to fully-funded learners over 19.

Kirsty Evans, director of funding policy at the agency, told delegates at Lsect’s autumn finance conference held at Morley College on November 6, that it now tried to avoid “might” in its documents, using “must” and “have to” instead.

“We’ve done that for clarification, so colleges know exactly what is and isn’t within their remit to charge,” said Ms Evans.

She said that providers must not make compulsory charges to fully-funded learners for the delivery of any learning activity funded by the agency, including administration fees, CRB checks and equipment charges.

However, there were charges that the agency believed were legitimate for providers to pass on.

“These include charges outside core learning, such as library fines, and security deposits for equipment and tools. We’ve been as explicit as we can be about those things that we believe are in scope for providers to charge, and those things that are out of scope,” she said

Delegates raised their concerns about the money that colleges would have to find to cover costs that they previously collected from learn-

ers. One delegate estimated efficiency savings could reach six figures.

Another delegate said that current funding levels did not reflect that some courses, such as beauty therapy, needed expensive materials.

“I think the government had always assumed that these fees were not being charged”

Ms Evans said that she understood their concerns about where they could make savings. “I’m happy that look at whether this could feed into our considerations of programme weighting factors. But what I can’t do today is guarantee there will be any changes as a result of that,” she said.

When another delegate highlighted the discrepancy between Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency rules on charging fees to fully-funded learners, Ms Evans responded: “I think the government had always assumed that these fees were not being charged . . . it came as a bit of a surprise to discover that they actually were. That’s why there has been this desire to clarify our position.”

A final point raised from the floor was about “success bonds” – deposits that some providers demanded from students, to be recouped only on successful completion of their qualification. Delegates asked whether these charges were seen as legitimate by the agency.

“We’ve looked at deposits for things that can be returned, such as equipment, but I have to say that I’m sure that the department would be very uncomfortable with what is effectively a success bond,” said Ms Evans.

“I think we too have heard about such incidents, and are trying understand the extent to which they are taking place – are they very prevalent or are they exceptional? Initial indications are that it is not acceptable to charge a success bond to learners.”

Nick Linford, managing director of Lsect, updated the delegates on EFA and agency funding reforms. Ms Evans then confirmed that the agency would publish another update by the end of November which, she said “would lay out an approach to the new apprenticeship element. “In addition, we are also absolutely committed to publishing in full, in January, what the system will look like and how it will work in 2013/14.”

Paul Smith, head of business development at the Student Loans Company, outlined some of the considerations providers should be making ahead of the implementation of FE loans to learners over 24.

“Providers with a loan facility will need to start making preparations ahead of the launch in April 2013, he said.

“These include appointing someone to manage the administration of loans, ensuring your IT systems are ready to manage the loan data, and publishing your methodology for awarding the discretionary learner support element of the fund. This must be done by April 1, and the criteria must clearly reflect the principles of equality and diversity.”

Others to address the conference included

“Initial indications are that it is not acceptable to charge a success bond to learners”

Val Wilkinson, director of finance and administration at Plumpton College and Robert Russell, from the Institute of Chartered Accountants, who together analysed the effectiveness of shared services to avoid VAT; and Chris Mantel, director for college audit and advisory services at RSM Tenon, who discussed accounting concern around partnerships and subcontracting.



The conference was held at Morley College, in London

Charges and Fees

**Skills
Funding
Agency**

Providers cannot charge a learner any fees or charges directly linked to the delivery of a learning aim. Such as –

- administration or enrolment costs
- registration with awarding body
- assessments
- CRB checks
- materials
- tools
- uniforms
- examination and certification costs.

Charges and Fees

**Skills
Funding
Agency**

Providers can:

- Pass on fees for membership of professional bodies for 19+ learners and can be conditional for enrolment
- Charge for extra activities outside of core learning, such as trips, or costs not directly related to learning, such as library fines, replacement ID cards or keys
- Charge security deposits for equipment and tools. Depreciation or wear and tear cannot be charged, only damage or loss.
- Charge for materials where the learner wishes to keep the item, but cannot be mandatory
- Charge employers, but cannot be mandatory or conditional.



Chris Mantel, RSM Tenon



Delegates were particularly keen to ask questions about fee charging



Kirsty Evans, Skills Funding Agency



Val Wilkinson, Plumpton College



Photos by Nick Linford



Robert Russell, Institute of Chartered Accountants



Paul Smith, Student Loans Company

 Office 365

The best collaboration tool for your students.

Microsoft Office 365 delivers cloud productivity to Academic Institutions of all sizes. Offering lower costs, better security, anywhere access to the things students need and most importantly, a happier more connected campus.

- ✓ free email
- ✓ instant messaging
- ✓ group video
- ✓ voice chat
- ✓ online document editing

Collabco offer a complete project management service that deals with the entire scope of moving to Office 365, from initial planning to migration and on-going support.

For more information please call us on:

0845 050 7380

or email office365@collabco.co.uk

Collabco

collabco.co.uk twitter.com/Collabco

FE Week event report

Get set, it's time for The Skills Show

Shane Mann**@shanermann**

The LG Arena in Birmingham will host a glittering ceremony on Wednesday night to mark the start of the first Skills Show.

Hundreds of the UK's most talented young people will have spent the weekend cramming in a vital last bit of practice before their skills are put to the test in their bid to be crowned the best in the UK. They can now expect to be put through a series of gruelling tests that will stretch their capabilities over three days.

The show's expected 100,000 visitors to the NEC will be exposed to hundreds of interactive stands. These zones are part of The Skills Show's £1m "Have-a-Go" local programmes in which 20 FE colleges, training providers, local authorities and other education bodies have developed an array of interactive activities aimed at engaging more people in vocational education. The experiences offered will be closely linked to training, learning and job opportunities in current and future employment markets.

"The show will inspire a new generation to get the most from further education, skills and apprenticeships"

More than 50 "Have-a-Go" experiences will be dotted around the centre's 100,000sqm site – from aircraft engineering to visual merchandising to web design to welding. Here are a few examples of the hands-on activities you'll have a chance to try.

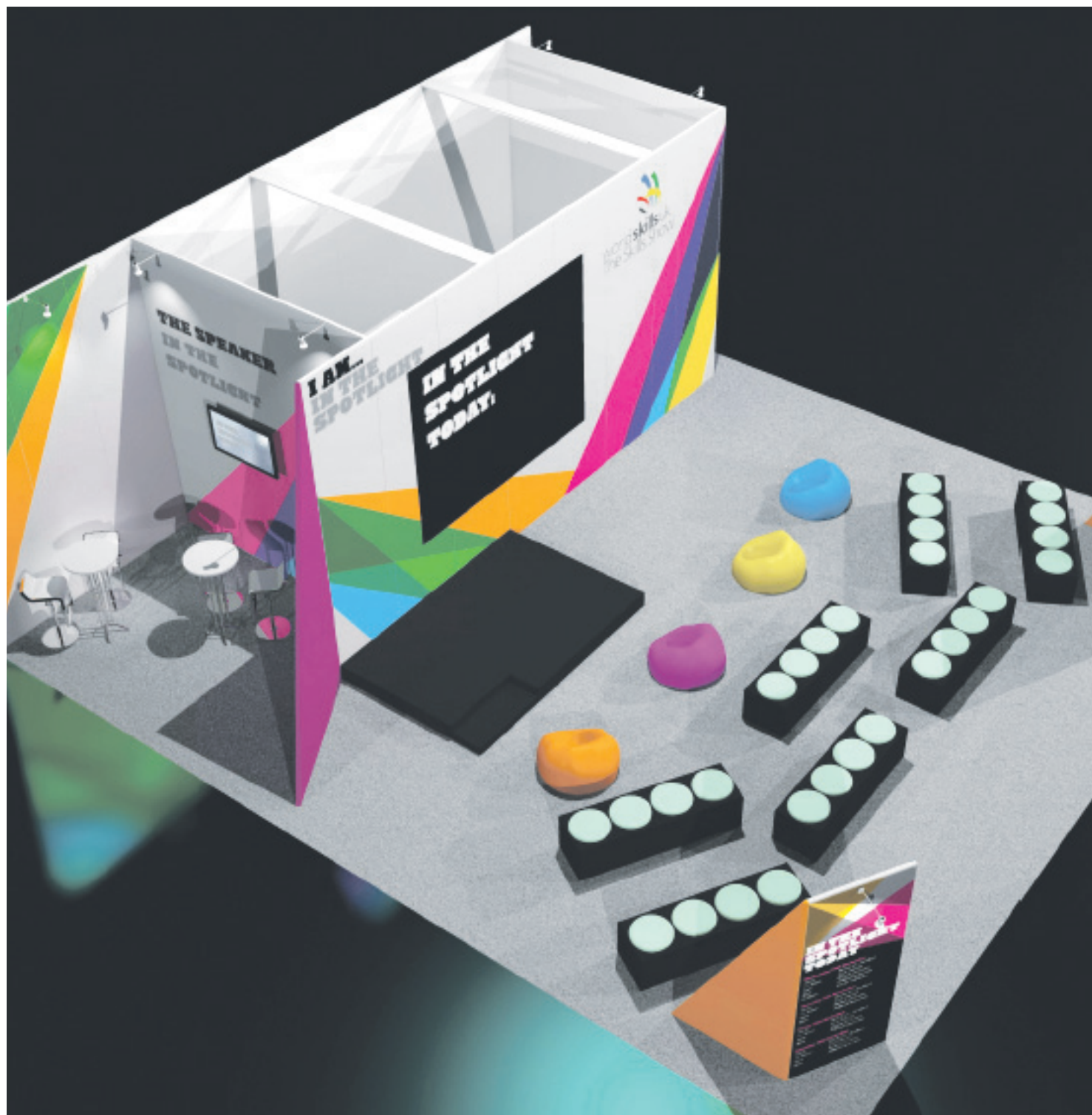
Burton and South Derbyshire College will host a range of activities and demonstrations including a solar car challenge organised by engineering students.

NEW College will showcase its links with Harley-Davidson with a new motorcycle on display. Visitors to the college's stand will also be able to find out about the inner workings of cars and motorcycles by taking part in activity sessions with interactive engine displays.

Dudley College will allow visitors to have a go at car body painting – on Thursday a car will be painted from head to toe in Skills Show branding. Meanwhile, the college's sports department will mirror the sporting challenges of the popular ITV programme, The Cube.

Up-to-the-minute careers advice will be available from organisations such as City & Guilds, the premier sponsors of the show, and the many other providers who will be there.

And showcase sessions will include demonstrations on theatrical make-up, circus skills, hair sculpture and food presentations – and a yo-yo expert and national competitor, 11-year-



An artist's impression of the Skills Show's "I am in the spotlight" exhibition zone

old David Braden Holmes.

Many high profile visitors are also expected. Last year Prime Minister David Cameron and London Mayor Boris Johnson dropped in to the WorldSkills London competition.

Last week the Skills Show announced Theo Paphitis, star of BBC Two's Dragons' Den and one of the UK's most high profile shopkeepers, as its first patron. His appointment followed his visit to WorldSkills London last year.

He said: "Skills are of vital importance to economic growth in the UK. The show will inspire a new generation to get the most from further education, skills and apprenticeships. The event is free and open to students of all ages, and is a must for anyone thinking about their future career." Mr Paphitis will be at the show's opening ceremony and competition.

Other famous faces expected to attend include British hockey Olympic bronze medalist, Sally Walton; Nick Holzher, star of BBC

TV's The Apprentice, and founder of food website, Whisk; and Alan Bird, former executive chef of London's famous Ivy restaurant. All will give real-life practical insights and advice into the world of work and skills.

"Try new skills and receive the latest careers advice"

The Skills Show will also have a series of fundraising activities for BBC's Children in Need, and special visits from the charity's mascot, Pudsey Bear. Mr Paphitis is also ambassador for this year's Pounds for Pudsey campaign, which encourages students to use entrepreneurial skills to raise money for the appeal. Every penny raised by Skills Show students will go straight to the charity.

Ross Maloney, chief executive of The Skills Show, said: "We want thousands of young people, parents, guardians, educators and employers to visit the show and be inspired by the highly skilled apprentices and young people in action, as well as try new skills for themselves and receive the latest careers advice that will help them to make informed choices about the future."

The Skills Show is free and will bring to life the best of the UK's colleges, apprenticeship and training providers with live performances, interactive demonstrations and exhibitions by groups of students. Register now at: www.theskillsshow.com

FE Week will be reporting all of the action from the show. Look out for exclusive coverage from our Twitter account (@feweek), the FE week website, the next edition of FE Week and our souvenir supplement with all the results, sponsored by City and Guilds.



Students from Bourneville College testing out the College's iPhone application have-a-go that will be at The Skills Show.



Katie Wright, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, beauty therapy.



Theo Paphitis, Patron of the Skills Show, at last year's WorldSkills London.



Danny Hoang, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, cooking.

Q&A with Ross Maloney, Skills Show chief

We are only a few days away from the largest UK Skills Show. How are things shaping up and what can we expect to see?

The past year seems to have flown by, it only seems like yesterday that we were finalising plans for the WorldSkills London competition. I am so impressed by what we have achieved in such a little time. We had more than four years to organise WorldSkills London 2011; we've had less than a year to organise the Skills Show. It's been tough and there have been many challenges, but the show is going to be spectacular.

In the end it has all come together rather nicely. The support we have received from the sector has been overwhelming and I want to thank everyone involved for their support.

In terms of what we can hope to see, well, where do I begin. Obviously there is the opportunity to watch the competitions in which hundreds of the most skilled and talented students will vie to be named best in the UK. The atmosphere will be tense, but it's great to have the opportunity to see these young people showcase their skills. The breadth of the curriculum covered is huge.

A key aim for us is to ensure the show is an experience for everyone who attends. We have made it a rule that anyone exhibiting

must have an interactive stand. So you won't be seeing lots of stands with bits of paper arranged neatly. They will allow you to have a go at a particular skill.

Who'll be there over the three days?

For college principals and managers, it will provide an opportunity to meet employers and discuss opportunities for learners. For students it's an opportunity to see showcased the many vocational opportunities that are out there - and hopefully provide lots of inspiration. Employers will have the chance to meet thousands of potential recruits and to meet providers. We also anticipate thousands of family and friends, particularly on the Saturday.

The show is a massive undertaking. What can we expect over the coming years?

We are only in Year 1, so you can expect to see even more next year. We'll conduct a postmortem to fix any problems and improve things. So the show can, and will, get bigger and better. We are committed to running the Skills Show for the next three years. Ultimately it is intended that it will become sector owned and led - something that I believe is very important.



Keeping an eye on apprenticeship policy, before and after the committee report

The apprenticeship debate has provided a regular source of controversy for *FE Week*, where the issue of questionably short courses was first raised more than a year ago. Months before the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee began its probe into apprenticeships, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the National Appren-

ticeship Service (NSA) were being quizzed by my reporting team about possible issues. And as the committee opened its inquiry, we were there all the way as eye-brows were raised over profit margins and potential conflicts of interest among training providers. New regulations were drawn up as the committee heard evidence from figures at

the top of the SFA and NAS. Meanwhile, *FE Week* kept up the pressure with publications dedicated to the issue. But our coverage of apprenticeships, which may appear to culminate with this edition's extensive reporting of the committee's findings, is far from over with Doug Richard's review due soon.



Nick Linford, editor



Concern at 12 week apprenticeships

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This is a significant move, as it would allow employers to claim the apprenticeship grant for a shorter period. However, this has raised concerns among training providers and employers alike. Some argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. Others worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

Ballot planned over cut price int. membership
The National Association of Apprenticeship Providers (NAAP) has announced that it is planning a ballot for its members to vote on whether to accept a new, lower subscription rate. The new rate is significantly lower than the current one, but it has raised concerns about the quality of the association's services. The NAAP has defended the move, claiming that the new rate will allow it to continue to provide high-quality services to its members. However, many members are worried that the new rate will lead to a reduction in the quality of the services provided.

Lsect
The Learning Skills Development Trust (LSDT) has announced that it is planning to launch a new initiative to support employers in developing their apprenticeship schemes. The initiative will provide employers with access to a range of resources, including training materials and expert advice. The LSDT has claimed that this initiative will help employers to develop high-quality apprenticeship schemes that provide meaningful training and experience for their apprentices.



Latest apprenticeship policy slammed

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

LSIS Chair profile
The LSIS Chair, Professor Sir David Bell, has been profiled in this issue. He is a leading expert on apprenticeships and has played a key role in the development of the apprenticeship system in the UK. He has also been a vocal critic of the government's approach to apprenticeships, particularly its focus on short-term schemes.

College round-up
This section provides a roundup of news from colleges across the country. It includes stories about new apprenticeship schemes, changes to existing ones, and other news relevant to the apprenticeship sector.

The Mayor of Tech
The Mayor of Tech, Lord Mayor of London Boris Johnson, has been profiled in this issue. He has been a strong advocate for apprenticeships and has played a key role in the development of the apprenticeship system in the UK.

FE Week on sale
This section provides information about where to buy FE Week and how to subscribe. It also includes details about the magazine's advertising rates and terms of sale.



Education unions join forces to petition against pension cuts

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Unions have joined forces to launch a petition against proposed pension cuts for teachers. The petition has already gathered thousands of signatures and is set to be presented to the government. The unions argue that the proposed cuts would have a devastating impact on teachers' lives and the quality of education for their pupils. They claim that the cuts would force teachers to work longer hours for less pay, which would lead to burnout and a loss of morale. The government has defended the cuts, claiming that they are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the education system. However, the unions remain determined to fight the cuts and are calling for widespread support for their petition.

Funding will be cut if standards not met
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that funding for schools will be cut if they do not meet the required standards. This has raised concerns among schools and parents alike. They worry that the cuts will lead to a decline in the quality of education and that schools will be forced to cut back on other important services. The government has defended the move, claiming that it is necessary to ensure that schools are providing a high-quality education for all their pupils.

NAS could withdraw funding from providers as they look into "every short apprenticeship"
The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has announced that it is considering withdrawing funding from providers who offer short-term apprenticeships. This has raised concerns among providers and employers alike. They worry that the move would lead to a reduction in the number of apprenticeships available and that it would be difficult to find alternative funding for their schemes. The NAS has defended the move, claiming that it is necessary to ensure that apprenticeships are providing meaningful training and experience for their apprentices.



Apprenticeship enquiry to be launched

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will launch an enquiry into the quality of apprenticeships. The enquiry will look at the effectiveness of the apprenticeship system and at the challenges faced by employers and training providers. The government has claimed that the enquiry will help to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that the apprenticeship system is providing high-quality training and experience for all its apprentices.

Provider owner also set-up awarding body
The owner of a training provider has been found to have set up an awarding body to certify his own apprentices. This has raised concerns about the quality of the training and the validity of the qualifications. The awarding body has defended the move, claiming that it is necessary to ensure that the qualifications are recognized by employers. However, many are worried that the move will lead to a proliferation of awarding bodies that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer.

When it comes to leadership, it's important to make the right choices.
This section features an article about the importance of leadership in the apprenticeship sector. It discusses the challenges faced by employers and training providers and offers advice on how to overcome them. It also includes a list of resources for employers and training providers who are looking to improve their leadership skills.

June 11, 2011

The expansion of short-term apprenticeships is highlighted first in the media by *FE Week*. Examples of programmes advertised as 12 weeks include call centre apprenticeships with Synapse, a training provider also run by the owner of Elmfield Training.

September 12, 2011

The SFA and NAS “look critically at apprenticeships delivered in a condensed way” and Shadow Minister Gordon Marsden calls for “vigilance”. Nick Linford, *FE Week* editor, goes to Number 10 to discuss the issue.

November 7, 2011

NAS is alerted by *FE Week* to more than 700 apprenticeships with the De Vere Academy lasting 12 and 16 weeks, advertised on their vacancy matching website. NAS announces a formal review of all programmes delivered in less than six months.

November 14, 2011

Ged Syddall, owner of Elmfield Training, had set-up his own awarding body to certificate qualifications, *FE Week* reports. Ofqual confirm it met with the governing body of Skills First Awards to discuss “transition to the new regulatory arrangements”.



Update on the apprentice inquiry

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

Apprenticeship quality tackled
The Government announces a minimum duration for apprenticeship delivery. This move is aimed at ensuring that apprenticeships provide meaningful training and experience for their apprentices. The government has claimed that this move will help to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to ensure that employers are providing high-quality training and experience for their apprentices.

Apprenticeship quality tackled
The Government announces a minimum duration for apprenticeship delivery. This move is aimed at ensuring that apprenticeships provide meaningful training and experience for their apprentices. The government has claimed that this move will help to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to ensure that employers are providing high-quality training and experience for their apprentices.



VP speaks out

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

Accounting for durations
The government has announced that it will require employers to provide evidence of the quality of their apprenticeships. This move is aimed at ensuring that apprenticeships provide meaningful training and experience for their apprentices. The government has claimed that this move will help to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to ensure that employers are providing high-quality training and experience for their apprentices.

Accounting for durations
The government has announced that it will require employers to provide evidence of the quality of their apprenticeships. This move is aimed at ensuring that apprenticeships provide meaningful training and experience for their apprentices. The government has claimed that this move will help to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to ensure that employers are providing high-quality training and experience for their apprentices.



Apprenticeships Where Next?

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

Apprenticeships Where Next?
This section features an article about the future of apprenticeships in the UK. It discusses the challenges faced by employers and training providers and offers advice on how to overcome them. It also includes a list of resources for employers and training providers who are looking to improve their apprenticeship schemes.



Apprenticeship quality? Point this Way

FE Week Exclusive
Nick Sumner
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

Dismay over 'serious breach of contract'
The Education Secretary, David Cameron, has announced that he will support a 12-week apprenticeship scheme. This has been slammed by training providers and employers alike. They argue that a 12-week scheme is too short to provide meaningful training and experience. They also worry that it could lead to a proliferation of short-term schemes that do not provide the quality of training that longer schemes can offer. The government has defended the move, claiming that it will allow employers to start seeing the benefits of the apprenticeship grant much earlier. However, the debate continues, with many calling for more evidence on the effectiveness of shorter schemes before a decision is made.

December 22, 2011

As part of an apprenticeships special edition, *FE Week* reports on government plans to introduce a 12-month minimum duration for 16 to 18-year-old apprenticeships. Reaction is broadly positive, with Martin Doel, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, describing the change as “sensible”.

March 12, 2012

The growth of accountancy apprenticeships at level two, three and four taking as little as 14 months in total is flagged up in *FE Week*. NAS confirms the practice would not be permitted from August this year, with the new minimum duration applying at each apprenticeship framework level.

April 13, 2012

In early April the government announces there is to be a minimum duration of 12 months for apprenticeships aged 19 and over, with some exceptions. A second apprenticeship supplement is produced by *FE Week*, dedicated to the debate on the quality and future of apprenticeships.

April 30, 2012

Evidence given to the BIS Committee by Geoff Russell, former SFA chief executive, and David Wain, interim chief executive at NAS, features prominently in *FE Week*. A key debating point is clarity over who was responsible for quality between the SFA and NAS. Mr Russell points to NAS.

Reform call on apprenticeships prompts FE reaction

Excessive profits at taxpayers' expense, a simple lack of definition on government aims and a focus on quantity over quality were just three of the many criticisms to emerge from an 11-month select committee inquiry into apprenticeships.

The Business, Innovation and Skills Committee called for an "overarching government strategy and clear purpose for the apprenticeship programme," with a "formal" definition of an apprenticeship.

It also recommended a review of profit levels among training providers after it heard evidence of Elmfield's high profit margin in its delivery of government-funded apprenticeships for supermarket giant Morrisons.

The committee further brought into question the current roles of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and called for a streamlined funding system.

Committee chair Adrian Bailey MP said: "The apprenticeship programme needs clarity, oversight and, in these straitened times, to demonstrate that it is providing value for money.

"There are many areas that require closer scrutiny, careful monitoring or even complete reform."

A spokesperson from Elmfield said the company "agreed on the need to balance quality and quantity in apprenticeships," and added: "The profit margin of 36 per cent quoted by the committee in 2009/10 was a one-off. Our post-tax profit margin for the following year was less than 15 per cent, which is comparable to other training providers of a similar size."

Other FE figures, including Matthew Hancock, welcomed the report. "I welcome this timely and thorough investigation into

apprenticeships and will consider carefully its suggestions to help make the programme even more successful. We have asked entrepreneur Doug Richard to report later this year on what more we must do," he said.

David Way, chief executive at NAS, said: "Working closely with the SFA, we have reviewed quality across the apprenticeship programme.

"We will continue to work hard to ensure that apprenticeships offer an excellent return on investment for the public purse as well as meeting the needs of the growing number of employers who offer apprenticeship opportunities, and encouraging even more employers to become involved."

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: "We agree high quality delivery of the apprenticeships programme is very important, but believe the committee in making its comments on quality rather than quantity could have given greater recognition to the fact that success rates are running at a record 76.4 per cent. One doesn't have to be at the expense of the other."

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director at 157 Group, said: "At last a vital part of the skills development landscape is receiving detailed attention and national coverage.

"FE colleges are uniquely placed to influence the development of high-quality apprenticeship programmes, as they are the major provider of vocational training that enables people to progress from pre-apprenticeship levels to the higher-level programmes, which the report rightly says should be held in high regard."

Teresa Firth, skills policy manager at the Association of Colleges, said: "The recommen-

dations about improving advice and guidance in schools, to ensure young people know about apprenticeships, should be enacted with the same energy that is devoted to UCAS applications."

She added: "We understand the concern about whether quality has been at the expense of quantity, but we think, with careful management, both can be achieved."

Tom Wilson, director of Unionlearn, the learning and skills organisation of the Trades Union Congress, said: "We welcome the assertion in the report that the quality of apprenticeships must be an equal priority with the quantity of apprentices if the programme is to be successful.

"All too often the TUC is made aware of poor quality schemes, as indicated by the BIS pay survey which suggested that 20 per cent of apprentices are not receiving any recognised training. We will continue to campaign to ensure apprentices receive both the pay and the training they deserve. This report is a great step towards achieving that.

"We also support the idea of the vocational route being given equal prominence as the academic route in careers advice. We agree that giving the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) a statutory role for promoting apprenticeships in schools will help to achieve this.

"However, we do not agree with the report's support for the Apprentice Training Agency (ATA) model.

"Frequently these offer poor quality schemes with low pay, only offering temporary work. They remove the responsibility for the apprentice from the employer. We believe that as a result, the ATA model will offer only the opposite of the clarity rightly called for elsewhere in the report."



Tom Wilson, Unionlearn



Teresa Frith, Association of Colleges



Matthew Hancock, FE Minister



David Way, National Apprenticeship Service



Graham Hoyle OBE, AELP



Lynne Sedgmore, 157 Group

The Complete Guide To Funding Apprenticeships

Order today from www.fundingguide.co.uk

Lsect
Learning & skills ~ events,
consultancy and training

In
partnership
with

ncfe
ncfe.org.uk

FE WEEK & ME

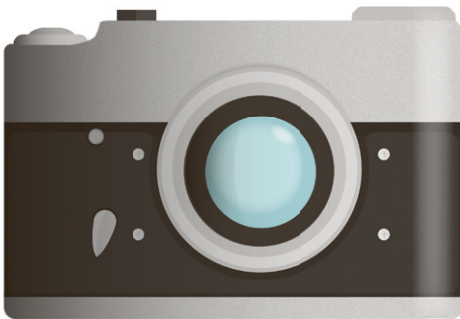
Photography Competition

in
partnership
with *n c f e*

We are very pleased to publish the winner of our FE Week and Me photography competition 2012. We had over 1500 people voting online for their favourite entry.

We asked learners to send in one photo of their choosing that depicted the start of the college year and what college means to them. The winning student will win a Nikon D5100 Camera kit (worth £700) and £500 to be the official FE Week photographer at our charity auction.

Here at FE Week we were very impressed with the fantastic quality of the entries and the massive response from readers. Here we bring our competition winner and two runners up.



WINNER



A teenager's day

Zackery Langsdon, Truro and Penwith College. These sunglasses reflect a typical college student in the summer. The left section shows the revision aspect, when a teenager is at home stressed by all of the work. The other section to the right is an average teenager showing off to a camera on the way to college.

STAFF PICK



It's not all fun and games

Conor Clarke, South Notts College. I photographed this picture because to me, photography is fun, but you still have to study at the same time for your research.

n-screen, On-demand

FREE Initial and Diagnostic Assessment Tool for OCR Functional Skills

If you are delivering OCR Functional Skills, you can now use our on-screen, on-demand assessment service. Sign-up for e-Assessment **now** and receive details of our new IADA Tool as soon as it goes live.

If you are not delivering OCR Functional Skills, you can apply for approval. Once approved you can sign-up for e-assessment.

There has never been a better time to deliver OCR Functional Skills:

- ✓ **On-screen, on-demand assessments for English and Maths**
- ✓ **Fast turnaround of results**
- ✓ **FREE teaching and learning resources on our website**
- ✓ **FREE Initial and Diagnostic Assessment Tool – coming soon.**

Also available – FREE training events this autumn term – visit ocronlinetraining.org.uk for full details.

Come and talk to our team at one of the forthcoming events this November:

World Skills: UK Skills Show, Birmingham – this weekend!

Join us for free coffee and view our full range of qualifications to help you to prepare your students for the world of work.

AoC Annual Conference, Birmingham – 20-22 November 2012

We're returning to AoC as one of the main sponsors. Don't miss our breakout sessions: *Making the most of new funding flexibilities in 16-19 study programmes*, and *Making the most of new funding flexibilities in skills and employability programmes*. Available to book now if you have already confirmed your delegate place.

Skills CFA National Conference, Birmingham – 29 November 2012

Visit our stand for a chance to win £100 worth of Amazon vouchers (terms apply).

We're also proud sponsors of **157 Group Annual Reception, Westminster – 4 December 2012**

Visit ocr.org.uk/fs

» Are You Outstanding?



CITY of BRISTOL
COLLEGE



We have opportunities for experienced senior managers to help lead one of the largest FE Colleges in the Country with over **35,000 students** and an annual turnover of **£64 million**. These roles will take the College through a period of dynamic transformation and refocusing on quality and reputation. We are members of the prestigious 157 group, a Beacon College, hold the Training Standard and the Investors in People Gold Standard.

Deputy Principal - £110k

» Under the leadership of Lynn Merilion, recently appointed as Principal, the College aims to be 'outstanding'. The College is rated 'good' and financially strong, with over 2,000 staff engaged with stakeholders, communities and employers. The key to our further success is a strong focus on teaching and learning, in which this post holder will play a pivotal role. For this we are looking to appoint an inspirational leader as Deputy Principal with the experience to help us continue to be successful and move to outstanding.

The Role:

- Work with the Principal and Governors to determine the vision and direction of the College
- Lead on the College curriculum strategy and on quality standards to achieve "outstanding"
- Drive standards and motivate teams
- Ensure the learner voice is positive
- Deputise for the Principal
- Lead on quality, reputation, learners and on Higher Education

The Candidate:

- Be a leader with success in a "good" College showing an improving trend
- Would have led significant organisation and behavioural change
- Possess the skills to motivate and inspire others
- Have achieved "good" or "outstanding" at recent inspections and/or in QAA assessments
- Have a thorough understanding of FE, HE and the 14-19 agenda
- An ambition to become a Principal

Assistant Principal - Higher Education - £70k

» This is an exciting new role in which the post holder will establish a clear culture and ethos that creates a distinctive identity for Higher Education in the College. Reporting to the Deputy Principal you will manage the University Centre.

The Role:

- Grow an HE offer to meet ambitious income targets
- To plan and develop a modern and attractive HE and professional curriculum
- Manage the delivery of HE, Access to HE, Professional and International English curriculum
- Deliver outstanding HE teaching and learning

The Candidate:

- Experience at middle/senior management in an education institution offering HE
- Able to work innovatively and independently
- Achieved good or outstanding at recent inspections or with QAA
- Hold a Masters Degree

For an informal discussion please contact Lynn Merilion, Principal and Chief Executive, on **0117 312 5007**. If you share our commitment to teaching and learning and can demonstrate this please download the Candidate Brief from www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs or contact Hayley Sutton, Recruitment Officer, on hayley.sutton@cityofbristol.ac.uk for a pack.

In order to apply, please submit the following to hayley.sutton@cityofbristol.ac.uk:

A letter of application stating how you meet the criteria; a comprehensive C.V detailing your career history and current salary; details of two referees (neither of whom will be approached without your permission)

Closing Date: Sunday 25th November 2012

Interview Dates: Deputy Principal - Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th December 2012

Assistant Principal - Higher Education - Thursday 6th December 2012

A relocation package is available to the successful candidates.



ACHIEVING POTENTIAL AND CREATING PROSPERITY

DOES YOUR AMBITION TO SUCCEED MATCH OURS?



Operations Director c£60k plus prp

About Learning Curve Group

Learning Curve (LC) is a directly funded SFA and EFA training provider based in Bishop Auckland, County Durham. Through our directly funded contracts and 26 FE College subcontracts we currently deliver a wide range of 16-18 and adult learner programmes throughout England, covering workbased and classroom funding streams. We currently have 5 skills centres delivering programmes to unemployed young people and adults and have exciting plans to expand these further.

Since 2004 we have grown our direct and FE College funding contracts year on year...turnover in 2011/12 exceeded £11m and we already have contracts in place to deliver over £14m of SFA/EFA funded activity in 12/13.

Last year was our best yet...we successfully delivered nationally accredited qualifications to over 28,000 learners via a team of 94 full time staff and over 350 part time tutors, assessors, administrators and support staff. We are very proud of our learners' achievements...success rates averaged 92% across our adult learner provision in 11/12.

We offer a wide range of innovative provision covering Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, VRQ short courses, employability and full cost provision. Delivery of distance and blended learning provision is a core part of our curriculum portfolio, and we are widely regarded as one of the market leaders for this type of provision.

Due to continued growth we are now looking to expand and strengthen our senior management team by recruiting two new Directors:

Operations Director: Reporting to the Managing Director, Learning Curve Group (LCG)

A successful and ambitious FE leader, you will have proven experience of significant curriculum development and operations management across a diverse portfolio of Adult Skills budget funded programmes, spanning learner responsive and workbased provision. Your main role will be to provide the leadership to guide and support curriculum managers and their delivery teams to achieve funding and operational targets, often within very challenging timeframes.

Harnessing the talents of a strong and established delivery team means you will need to 'hit the ground running', so it is vital that you are fully conversant with the Adult Skills Budget funding methodology, and its impact on curriculum delivery and design. You will also need a thorough understanding of the audit and QA requirements associated with College subcontracting. Experience in the management of good quality blended/distance learning delivery would be advantageous.

You will lead on all external liaison with our College partners to monitor performance against agreed targets. As an experienced Senior Manager you will have the skills to build on these existing College relationships and identify new partnership opportunities, working closely with the Chief Executive and Managing Designer.

Director of MIS & Funding c£45k plus prp

Director of MIS & Funding reporting to the Managing Director, Learning Curve (LC)

We are looking for a proven team manager and experienced MIS/Funding professional with excellent communication, organisational, problem solving, IT and analytical skills.

You will play a pivotal role in supporting our development by leading a small ambitious team that will deliver high quality learner data management across 16-18, adult learner and workbased funding streams.

You will need a detailed understanding of the individual learning Record (ILR), Learning aims Reference Application (LARA) and the Learner Information System (LIS). You will have detailed knowledge of SFA/EFA funding and audit regulations to ensure full compliance when reporting to regulatory bodies and subcontract partners. You should have experience of the data management and audit associated with our subcontracted provision via an extensive FE College partner network. As LC is also a lead contractor for 9 private training providers you will also lead on managing data where our directly funded provision is outsourced to subcontractors. The ability to work flexibly and accurately to tight timescales is essential.

Interested in working with Learning Curve?

If your ambition to succeed matches ours, we would like to hear from you

Please send your CV and covering letter to Christine.Mason@learning-curve.co.uk

Closing date for applications is 3rd December 2012

Should you wish to discuss these opportunities further please contact Christine Mason on 01388 741105 to arrange an informal discussion with our director

www.learning-curve.co.uk



Leeds City College

Head of Faculty – Hospitality & Catering

Leeds

£41,813 - £45,682

Do you have the vision to lead the development of a high quality innovative curriculum area that meets the changing needs of students and employers alike? If so, this is your opportunity to build your career with the UK's third largest FE establishment as we drive forward our ambitious plans for growth.

Your challenge is to lead your team to deliver a responsive portfolio across the Hospitality area - including Food Manufacture, Culinary Arts and Travel & Tourism. You'll also champion quality at all levels, inspiring everyone around you to create an exceptional learning experience. A proven track record of leadership and curriculum development gained in an FE environment is essential.

For further details and to apply, please visit www.leedscitycollege.ac.uk/jobs or contact HR on 0113 308 7900

Closing date: 12.00 noon 23 November 2012

Interview date: week commencing 3 December 2012

Leeds City College celebrates diversity. We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All successful applicants are, therefore, required to complete an enhanced CRB disclosure.

All applicants will be treated fairly irrespective of race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. The college actively welcomes applications from all sections of the community.



play your part
leedscitycollege.ac.uk

To advertise here
contact Chardelle
Mason on
020 8123 4891



MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES (MIS) MANAGER

Salary £37k per year

full-time (35 hours per week)
Local Government Pension Scheme

Hillcroft is the National Residential College for Women. Based five minutes from Surbiton Station, on the outskirts of London, Hillcroft has an excellent track record in providing women from diverse backgrounds opportunities to progress in achieving their educational potential. *Hillcroft was judged as good at its last Ofsted inspection (2010).*

An excellent opportunity has arisen for an experienced MIS professional to manage and develop the College's student management information system

and to implement new systems. Reporting to the Finance Director, you will ensure the regular provision of curriculum and performance management information to enable effective strategic and operational decision-making.

To apply for this role and request an application pack, please email: hillcroftrecruitment@ngahr.com

For more information, please either visit the College website: www.hillcroft.ac.uk or call our recruitment hotline: 0844 576 0562.

Closing date for receipt of applications: **Wednesday 21st November 2012.**

Interviews to be held on: **Monday 3rd December 2012.**

Hillcroft College aims to be an Equal Opportunities employer and welcomes applications from men and women from all sections of the community.

Learning Support Team Leader

Emergency Planning College
Easingwold, York

Salary £25,000 - £30,000

Provide strong management and leadership to a team of 3 Learning Support Officers within a busy training environment which delivers learning solutions both on and off site as well as internationally.

Commercial awareness, sound financial acumen, strong attention to detail and an ability to react flexibly at short notice is required as well as a total commitment to high standards of customer service. Must have ability to communicate at all levels, work unsupervised and remain calm under pressure. Previous team management experience essential as is a high level of computer literacy. Knowledge/experience of a training and education environment highly desirable.

Enquiries to **Helen Jubb** on 01347 825082/825190
Apply on-line at: <http://tinyurl.com/c3yqrc>

To find out more about the Emergency Planning College please visit: www.epcollege.com

Bringing service to life



Lsect

Learning & skills ~ events, consultancy and training

Finance Assistant £20k-£25k DoE

We are seeking an enthusiastic and hardworking individual to assist in the day to day running of the accounts at Lsect.

The primary responsibilities of this role will be to maintain and update sales invoicing systems, ensuring accuracy of invoices issued and timely collection of receivables. You will also assist in the management of all aspects of credit control within Lsect, and the preparation of annual returns for taxation and accounting purposes.

Book-keeping experience and attention to detail is essential.

Apply by emailing your CV to jobs@feweek.co.uk by November 16



Publisher of

Warwickshire
College

Head of Sixth Form Studies

Location: **Leamington** Salary: **£50,000** Ref No: **EL1**

Due to retirement, we are seeking a new Head of Sixth Form.

We are an entrepreneurial College, part of the Gazelle Group, and you will be required to lead and develop new curriculum opportunities to maximise student choice, success and progression.

Closing date **Tuesday 20 November 2012**
Interviews are expected to take place: **Thursday 29 November 2012**
Apply online at warwickshire.ac.uk



For more jobs go to
www.feweek.co.uk



City&Guilds

worldskillsuk
The Skills Show

Premier Sponsor of The Skills Show

15-17 Nov, the NEC Birmingham

REGISTER ONLINE NOW
theskillsshow.com

MARK MAGINTY, MECHATRONICS
MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE
WORLDSKILLS 2011

LAST YEAR, 9 OUT OF 14
WORLDSKILLS MEDAL WINNERS HELD
A CITY & GUILDS QUALIFICATION
SUPPORT TOMORROW'S WINNERS AT THE SKILLS SHOW 2012

FE Week Sudoku challenge

		1		5	2	6		4
		9		1	3	5		8
							3	9
				8		2		5
6		7		3				
8	7							
1		2	7	4		8		
9		5	2	6		3		

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

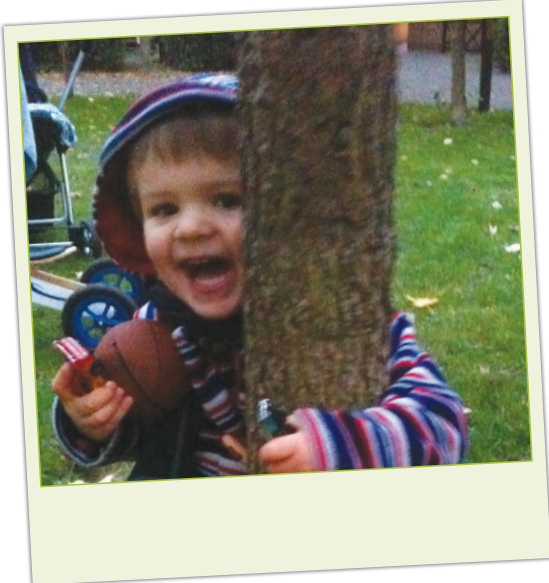
Solutions: Next week

1					8			7
	3					6	1	
	4		1					
6				8		3		
		8	7		9	4		
		5		4				8
				1	7		8	
	9	1					2	
7			4					6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been hiding"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford